

**VILAS COUNTY
SNOWMOBILE TRAIL SAFETY
COMMITTEE
Minutes of August 16, 2012 Meeting**

St. Germain Community Center

Present: Gary Peske, Ralph Sitzberger, Dale Mayo, Gerald Ritter, Tim Price, Cindy Burzinski, Renn Karl, Mike Keintz, Holly Tomlanovich, Stan Guif, Leo Crawley

Also present: George Feith, Property Owner; Wally Gust, Vilas County News-Review; Fred Radtke, Town of St. Germain Supervisor; Karen Martens, Landowner; Tom Martens, Landowner; Gina Egan, Vilas County Health Dept.; Raymond Wolfe, LDF Conservation Warden; Denny Bedish, Wis. State Patrol; David Walz, WI DNR; Ken Anderson, Media; Marv Anderson, St. Germain Property Owner; Milt Klingsporn, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club; Tom Christensen, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club; Allen Clemmenson, President, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club; Jim Wendt, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club; Roger W. Klein, Board Member, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club; John Vojta, St. Germain Town Board Supervisor; Brian Jopek, Lakeland Times; Carol Nadela; Kathryn Schultz, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club member; Gary Schultz, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club member; Jim Rybarczyk; Hazel Christianson, Landowner; Lee Christianson, Landowner

Meeting was called to order at 10 am

Verification of posting of the meeting by D. Mayo.

Motion to approve agenda by Sitzberger, second by D. Mayo. Motion Carried.

Motion to approve minutes of the June 21, 2012 meeting by Sitzberger, second by Guif. Motion Carried.

Chairman, Peske welcomed all in attendance. Followed by the reading of Snowmobile Trail Safety Committee function as provided in the Standing Rules. Sitzberger added that the Committees only focus is safety not location or open/closure of trails.

Resolution amending Standing Rules – The L & J Committee will draw up an amendment to the standing rules to add/include a representative of Vilas County Tourism & Publicity to sit on committee. Currently this is Cindy Burzinski. Further to reinstall a representative of Vilas County Public Health to sit on committee. Currently this is Gina Egan. This Resolution will be presented at the next Vilas County Board Meeting.

Alliance report – Crawley had no report as the Vilas County Alliance has not met for the first time for the 2012-13 season.

DNR report – Price had no report/update.

Sheriff's report – Ritter had no report/update.

Recreational Officer – Ritter said that there may be a need to restructure this officer into a full time officer as the DNR will be increasing the required hours which determines funding.

County Coordinator report – Trail Opening Policy – Mayo presented Draft of amendment of item #3 which has come back to this committee as it is in direct opposition to the first paragraph of the Trail Opening Policy for reworking. Karl representing the Vilas County Snowmobile Alliance stated the Alliance is in favor of a policy to reopen. He feels that the trails are inspected twice by the County Snowmobile Coordinator & should be in safe condition. Crawley added groomers are responsible to inspect and report/correct any issues on the trail. He is in favor of the policy. Mayo was asked by Peske if there is a downside to reopening. Mayo said that the reopening would more than likely occur in late season. Signage that has to be replaced may be hard to reinstall due to the frost & thaw. Sitzberger asked that the last phrase “The County inspection prior to reopening may be waived” should cover the first paragraph conflict. Milanowski, Corp Council said that a letter of notification to Mayo from each club that states the trails are in safe and inspected condition is recommended. Peske said that a letter of notification should be changed to certification.

Motion by Dale & second by Karl to send back to the Vilas County Alliance for review & rework. Motion carried.

County Coordinator report – Highway 155 crossing – To clarify, Mayo asked if any Committee Member was a member of the Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club. No Snowmobile Trail Safety Committee Member is a member of the Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club.

Mayo laid out the trail issue. This trail is a Corridor Trail and it has very specific requirements that must be met. When a Corridor is closed and seeking relocation it is necessary to meet these requirements. Many trail crossing scenarios have been researched. Attached to these minutes are the options for trails.

Mayo further said that the DOT designates Hwy 155 as a low volume highway with no unusual safety trends. For this reason there is no need to reduce speed from 55 to 45 MPH. There however have been safety concerns aired by the Town of St. Germain, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club and citizenry. For that reason Mid State Associates (MSA) was hired to review all potential crossings and to look at other potential safe crossings. Attached to these minutes are their findings.

Crossings Discussion – The current Hwy 155 crossing has had no accident going back as far as 1974. It is a somewhat diagonal crossing with 385 feet sight distance from one direction and 420 feet from other direction which meets minimum and has proved safe. This location is being discontinued due to a landowner closure of access.

Option 1 – Offers 530 feet visibility in both directions. It requires culverts to elevate the ditchline to highway height. It will further require a 3 foot deep removal of tree line north of the crossing. MSA would oversee to make sure the desired visibility is achieved. Trail travels from Lost Lake Drive South onto hwy right of way crossing 60 feet north of 16 Rd at the Kosceilniak property.

Option 2 – Offers 530 feet visibility from the south. 600 feet visibility from the north. There is a need to apply for a DNR permit due to wetland impacts. Trail travels from Found Lake Rd South on hwy right of

way heading up the right of way 1000 feet past Sixteen Road and then crossing and coming back to the Kosceilniak driveway.

It was then explained who is responsible for what portions of trails.

Town of St. Germain is responsible for the opening & closing of trails on roads.

DOT is responsible to evaluate the crossings.

Vilas County is responsible for location on right of way and facilitation of the crossing.

Sitzberger who has gone out to the site several times to evaluate stated Option 2 has wetland issues which would require 2 permits, one of which would be a Federal permit. He also has concerns as this Option includes a switch back type of trail. He felt that riders would take the most direct path to the trail across the road and cross at an uncontrolled location. For those reason he is in favor of Option 1 aka 16 Rd crossing. Keintz concurred.

Mayo called on the Bo-Boen Club for their views. Wendt, Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club Trail Boss favored Option 1 logistically. Clemmenson, Bo-Boen President and Christianson, Bo-Boen Club member are also comfortable with Option 1.

Peske recognized Vojta of the Town of St. Germain Board who reiterated that their purpose as a Board is only to authorize Town Roads as trails.

Landowner T. Martens was recognized. He stated he felt that if safety was the true issue he felt Option 2 was the safest.

Tomlanovich aired concerns of the switchback trail that is part of Option 2. Trail 10W of Eagle River had the same situation until recently. It resulted in numerous illegal crossings at an uncontrolled location. The Sno-Eagles Snowmobile Club installed signing and fencing to stop the crossing to no avail. The trail was restructured due to a reroute to eliminate the switchback. For that reason she favored Option 1 from a safety stand point.

MSA prefers Option 2 due to more visibility but does recognize the issue of the switchback in the trail.

Radtke, Town of St. Germain Supervisor reiterated the MSA preference.

Martens referred to Town of St. Germain Corp Attorney Lucarelli's letter of 5/22/12 referencing safety.

Bedish, State Patrol officer, has been out there several times and has also worked that area. He feels Option 2 is the safest crossing.

Mayo brought the discussion back to public safety. Also indicating that the Town of St. Germain has no authority to approve crossings.

Peske asked for a motion. Sitzberger made a motion that the Vilas County Snowmobile Committee feels that Option 1 is the safest crossing and for that reason recommend that crossing. Second by Keintz. Discussion followed. Wendt stated that MSA did not certify that either crossing was unsafe. Anderson,

Town of St. Germain Board issued concerns on 16 Rd. Karl restated safety was the Committees concern and Option 1 is the best route.

Motion carried unanimously.

Mayo noted that the Option 1 location will be monitored by the DOT for safety. If there proves to be a problem with accidents, the DOT could revoke the permit.

Mayo said Bidding is 9/5/12. Scheduled start 10/1/12. He further stated that with this said there is need for a commitment from the Town of St. Germain & Bo-Boen Snowmobile Club that 16 Rd will be a trail.

Advertising – Burzinski passed out proposed Snowmobile Safety Committee PSA for committee review and choice at the next meeting. Price said that the Communications Class at Northland Pines Schools will participate in creation of PSA's. Burzinski further reported that she has ordered posters from IMSA. The number given for each request is limited so it was recommended that each snowmobile club in the Alliance order posters so that the number of 100 posters can be achieved.

Old Business – None

Letters and Communications – Radtke said he was disappointed in the Committees choice regarding the Hwy 155 crossing. Secondly he recommended that the Committee be restructured and expand to all trails in the County.

Next Meeting Date – 9/20/12 Location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am with motion by Sitzberger. Second by Keintz. Carried.

Respectfully submitted by Holly A. Tomlanovich